A Critical Study of Ecoconsciousness in the Selected Works of *R.K. Narayan, Anita Desai and Ruskin Bond*

Faculty of Humanities

Synopsis Submitted to the

Swami Ramanand Teerth Marathwada University Nanded

For the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in

English

By

Wanole Santosh Shesherao

(M.A. English, B.Ed.)

Under the Guidance of

Dr. Vinay D. Bhogle

(M.A., M.Phil., Ph.D.)

Assistant Professor

Department of English, Degloor College, Degloor

Research Center - School of Language, Literature and Culture Studies

S.R.T.M.U. Nanded

1) Introduction :-

The present research work deals with econonciousness in the works of Indian writers writing in English. The select works of R.K. Narayan, Anita Desai and Ruskin Bond have been studied in the light of ecology with ecocritical perspective to arrive at conclusion : 'Malgudi Days', (1943) The English Teacher (1945) and 'Tiger For Malgudi' (1983) of R.K. Narayan, 'Cry The Peacock' (1963) Fire On The Mountain (1997) And 'Where Shall We Go This Summer? (1975) of Anita Desai, 'Our Trees Still Grow in Dehra' (1991) 'Dust On The Mountain' (1990) And 'Vagrants in the Valley' (1987) of Ruskin Bond have been selected with common perspectives among them. The study also mentions about how they have used nature as landscape, as beautiful atmosphere lively atmosphere in their works. The present study carries out with the main objective how far an ecocritical perspective illuminates the works of R.K. Narayan, Anita Desai and Ruskin Bond.

Ecocriticism as a concept first emerged in the late 1970 at meetings of the WLA (The Western Literature Association, a body whose field of interest is the literature of the American West). In his introduction to a series of brief position papers all entitled 'What is ecocriticism? Michael P. Branch traces word 'ecocriticism' back to William Rueckert's 1978 essay 'Literature and Ecology : An Experiement in Ecocriticism'.

The term ecocriticism was coined by William Ruckert in 1978 in his essay Literature and Ecology : An Experiment in Ecocriticism. But it was discussed and widely used in the meeting of the WLA held in 1989. Yet apparently it remained inactive in critical vocabulary until the 1989 Western Literature Association meeting, when Cheryll Glotfelty (at the time a graduate student at Cornell, now Assistant professor of literature and environment at the university of Nevada, Reno) not only received the term but worked for its uses in the critical field which there after had been used as 'the study of nature writing "Cheryll Glotfelty simply defined' ecocritism as the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment. But

it was a thought provoking question 'Should we call it ecocriticism or green studies?' Both terms are used to denote a critical approach which began in the USA in the 1980's and in the UK in the early 1990. Glen Love (Professor of English at the University of Oregon) too seconded the call for ecocriticism at the same western literature Association meeting. Since that meeting held in 1989 the usage of the term ecocriticism has bloomed and started getting the attention of the scholars. The Association for the 'Study of Literature and Environment (ASLE) was established in 1992 along with' The Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment (ISLE) in 1993. In 1996, it is said to be officially heralded by the publication of to seminal works, 'The Ecocriticism Reader', edited by Cheryll Glotfelty and Harold Fromm and 'The Environmental Imagination' by Lawrence Buell.

At present ecocriticism is in full swing and is a readily accepted theory worldwide. It is said to be the study of literature and environment from an interdisciplinary point of view, where literary scholars analyze texts that illustrate environmental concerns and examine the various ways literature treats the subject of nature. Ecocriticism mainly concerns the relationship between human and nature. Primitive people have lived in the lap of Nature and had preserved it. But in the late 20th Century the people became self-centered. They made use of all natural resources for self purpose and endangered the environment. It resulted in eco-imbalance and the environmental pollution. Now, the whole world is under the curse of global warming. It is the reason that ecocriticism has acclaimed its significance in last three decades.

Many writers have become ecoconscious or environment conscious while dealing with their themes which have close relationship with the environment and nature. Today, the literature has become the mode of expression about environment and its importance in human life and universe. Environmental balance or protection has become the hot issue and concern for the world community. The ecological disaster has become a threat, today which resulted into drawing the attention of the writers. It is this sense of concern and its reflection in literature that has given a rise to a new branch of literary theroy known as ecocriticism.

Though the study regarding environmental issues and other ecological problems world over is same, there is a phenomenal difference between Western and Indian thinking. Greek-Roman philosophers belived 'the man as a measure of all things'. They belived that man is free to enjoy and exploit whatever was there in nature.This self - Centered philosophy continued in the modern period also with slight change where the philosophers believed in 'Great chain of being'. In the 20th Century American enviornmentalists and writers have shown keen interest in the environment and its changing nature. The writers depicted the themes related to nature through their writings like, Emerson, Henry David, Thoreau and Robert Frost. But in Indian or Eastern philosophy man is not allowed to exploit or extract the nature. The nature or environment happened to be the part and parcel of culture and life of Indian society. Through regular traditions and rituals Indians have been worshipping nature and environment in day today life. The Indian philosophy believes in the conservation of nature and same is reflected in every aspect of life like literature, art and sculpture.

In Indian context, Ecocriticism has been treated as a core part of their works where they made use of landscapes, beautiful nature and zoocriticism in their writings. Ecocriticism is the sweet fruit of those seeds which had been sown earlier by the writers like, R.K. Narayan, Raja Rao, Anita Desai, Kamala Markandaya and Ruskin Bond. They have invoked nature elements for expressing their views, their contemporary regional and social atmospheres. They also have described fertile, colourful atmosphere, happiness, gloominess, bitterness, disturbing, lively, tragic atmosphere etc. They have tried to maintain the bond between human and nature. They understood the nature deeply and presented it through their works. Hence the present study tries to expand the perspectives of R.K. Narayana, Anita Desai and Ruskin Bond's selected works by relating an ecological aspect to it.

2) Research Methodology :-

It is the weakness of ecocriticism that it has not developed a methodology. The absence of methodology is due to lack of radical internal debate since the first 'Association for the Study of Literature and Environment (ASLE)' conference at Fort Collins in 1995. There are no basic theoretical tenents for ecocritical practices to study the literary works.

Therefore, the research methodology adopted for investigation is of analytical, interpretative, evaluative and comparative in nature. The primary and the secondary sources will be analysed for arriving at th e conclusions.

The present study makes use of primary sources which are broadly to embody all sources that are original. Primary source provides the first hand information that is closest to the object of the study. In this context, the original book written by R.K. Narayan, Anita Desai and Ruskin Bond have explored to arrive at conclusion.

The secondary sources also have been used for the data collection. A secondary source is a source that provides non-original or second hand data or information. Secondary sources are written about primary sources. Research summaries reported in text books, magazines, newspapers, journals, encyclopedia, websites and online portals etc. are considered secondary sources.

3) Hypothesis :-

1) It is observed that R.K. Narayan, Anita Desai and Ruskin Bond are deeply rooted in the process of textualizing ecological observations and unrestrained changes.
2) It is also assumed that unless we study the structures of ecological concerns, we are unable to get the expected result to diagnose and reset natural system and hence these authors need to be studied in the light of ecocriticism.

4) Objectives :-

The following are the major objectives of the study.

1) To study ecocriticism as an important and recent movement in the field of modern criticism.
2) To study the selected works in the light of ecology.
3) To study how do the authors create environmental awareness through their literary writings.
4) To analyze and understand the impact of environment imbalance over the lifestyle of human beings.
5) To study the close relation of nature and literature and how literature addressed the core issues of the society through various themes.
6) To understand the concepts like anthropocene, anthropocentrism, biocentrism and ecocentrism.
7) To elucidate the inter-relationship between the man and nature.
8) To understand various perspectives of awareness social, cultural, political and sometimes economical too.
9) To understand the enviornment crisis, ethical and aesthetic dimension caused due to it.
10) To study the impression and effects of the works in the present social milieu.
11) To pave the path for further study.

5) Necessity of Research :-

The present study focuses on the selected works of R.K. Narayan, Anita Desai and Ruskin Bond in the light of ecocriticism. India literature has been adhered to the nature and culture since antiquity. Many writers have been presenting nature as an inevitable part of Indian Tradition and Culture through their works. R.K. Narayan, Anita Desai, Raja Rao, Kamala Markandaya, Arundhati Roy, Bhabani Battacharya,

Kiran Desai and Ruskin Bond are some of the prominent writers who have presented nature, to describe their emotions, expressions and various moods. Therefore, the research scholar has attempted to study the selected writers in the light of ecocriticism. These writers haven't been studied previously with ecological or ecocritical point of view. So it is the necessity of research to study these writers with ecocritical touch to their selected works.

6) Singificance of the study :-

The present study has the huge relevance with the contemporary social temper. The present day, environmental balance or protection has become the issue of paramount importance and concern for the world community. The ecological disaster has become a threat to the world. The authors chosen for research attempt to describe the bond of human and nature to understand the ecology through their works.

7) Scope and Limitations of Research :-

This research would deal with the literary contribution of three authors which include ;

1) R.K. Narayan :-

I) Malgudi days

II) Tiger for Malgudi

III) The English Teacher

2) Anita Desai :-

I) Cry, The Peacock.

II) The Fire On The Mountain.

III) Where Shall We Go This Summer?

3) Ruskin Bond :-

I) Vagrants in The Valley.

II) Our Trees Still Grow In Dehra.

III) Dust On the Mountain.

These works would be considered for detailed analysis leading to ecocritical speculations. Therefore, as per requirements an attempt would be made to study, short fiction, non-fiction and other works of these authors to deliberate the standpoints for comparison as well as for cross analysis.

8) Tentative chapter scheme :-

The present study has been divided into five chapters as mentioned below.

Chapter I - Introduction.

Chapter II - Study of the works of R.K. Narayan,

1) Malgudi Days.
2) The English Teacher.
3) The Tiger for Malgudi.

Chapter III - Study of the works of Anita Desai.

1) Cry, The Peacock.
2) Where Shall We Go This Summer?
3) The Fire On The Mountain

Chapter IV - Study of the works of Ruskin Bond.

1) Vagrants in The Valley.
2) Dust On the Mountain.
3) Our Trees Still Grow in Dehra.

Chapter V - Conclusion

Bibliography :-

*** Primary Sources :**

1) Narayan, R.K. *'Malgudi Days'*, Indian Thought Publication 1942; Penguin Classics, 1982

2) Narayan, R.K. *'The English Teacher'* Eyre and Spottiswoode, London, 1942; Indian Thought Publication, Madras, 2005; University of chicago paperbacks, 1980.

3) Narayan, R.K. *'The Tiger for Malgudi'*, Heinemann, 1990, London; Indian Thought Publication, Eight reprinted, 2005, Chennai.

4) Desai, Anita, *Cry, The Peacock*, Peter Owen, 1963, London; Orient Paperbacks, 1965, New Delhi.

5) Desai, Anita, *Where Shall We Go This Summer*?, Vikas Publication, Delhi, 1975; Orient Paperbacks, Delhi 1982.

6) Desai, Anita, '*Fire On The Mountain*', William Heinemann, London 1977; Allied Publishers, New Delhi, 1985.

7) Bond, Ruskin, '*Our Trees Still Grow In Dehra*' Penguin, New Delhi, 1991.

8) Bond, Ruskin, '*Dust On The Mountain*; Julia Macrae Books, UK, 1990. Books, India, 1996.

9) Bond, Ruskin; '*Vagrants in The Valley*; UK Edition, Penguin Book India Pvt, Ltd., Paperback, 2016.

*** Secondary Sources :**

1) Barry, Peter. ' *Beginning theory: An Introduction To Literary and Cultural Theory*; Third Edition Viva Books Private Limited, 2015 print.

2) Abrams M.H., Harpham Geoffrey; '*A Handbook Of Literary Terms*, Cengage Learning India Private Limited, Ninth Indian Reprint, 2011

3) Rueckert, William; ' *Literature and Ecology " An Experiment in Ecocriticism. 'The Ecocriticism Reader*" Landmark in Literary Ecology. Ed. Cheryll Glotfelty and Harold Fromm, The university of Georgia Press: Athens, 1996, Print.

4) Garrard, Greg, '*Ecocriticism ; The New Critical Idiom*. London and New York " Routledge, 2004 Print.

5) Garrard, Greg, ' *The Oxford Handbook of Ecocriticism*, Oxford University Press, Aug. 2014, Print.

6) Borlik, Todd A. ' *Ecocriticism and Early Modern English Literature*, Abingdon Routledge, 2011.

7) Selvamony, Nirmal Nirmaladasan. ' *Essays in Ecocriticism*, Sarup Book Publishers Pvt. Ltd. 2005.

8) Sivaramkrishnan Murli and Jana Ujjwal, *Ecological Criticism for Our Times :Literature, Nature and Critical Inquiry* : Author Press, 2011.

9) White, Jr. Lynn ' *The Historical Roots of our Ecological Crisis*. '*The Ecocriticism Reader*. Eds. Glottelty and Fromm. Athens, GA : The University of Georgia Press, 1996.

10) Prasad, Madhusudan. ' *Imagery in The Novels of Anita Desai* : *A Critical Study*. World Literature Today. 1989, Print.

11) Gopal N.R., ' *A Critical Study of The Novels of Anita Desai*. ' New Delhi : Atlantic Publishers and Distributors, 1995, Print.

12) Indira,S., '*Anita Desai As An Artist : A Study of Images and Symbols*, New Delhi : Creative Books, 1994. Print.

13) Aggrawal, Amita, ' *The Fictional World of Ruskin Bond* : New Delhi : Sarup & Sons Ltd. 2005.

14) Majumder, Bipasha. ' *Green Study of Anita Desai's Where Shall We Go This Summer?*, IJELLH, Volume III, Issue IV, 2015.

15) Sharma, P.D., *Ecology and Environment*, Meerut; Rastogi Publications.

16) Boddice, Rob. *Introduction Anthropocentrism : Humans, Animals, Environments*. Boston : Brill Books, 2011.

17) Sumathy, U., *Ecocriticism in Practice*. New Delhi : Sarup Books, 2009 Print.

* **Webliography :**

* < http://en. wikipedia. org/
* < http://www. britannica.com/
* < http://www.sparknotes.com/
* < http://www.academia.edu/
* < http://www.org/site/resources/ecocritic/
* < http://www.tandfonline.com/
* < http://www. dataconferenceworld.in/
* < http://www.puneresearch.com/
* < http://www.the-criterion.com/
* < http://www.ecobooks.com/books/ecocritic
* < http://www. enotes. com/topics/ecocriticism
* < http://www.ndpublisher.in/
* < http://www.wiley.com/Environmentalcriticism

Place : Nanded

Date :

Research supervisor. Research Scholar

Dr. Vinay D. Bhogle. **Wanole Santosh Shesherao**